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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE AIR STAFF SUMMARY SHEET

TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Grade and Surname)
1	Approval	
2	Coord	
3	Coord	
4	Signature	

ORIGINATOR (Symbol)	TELEPHONE NO.	DATE
AFDSD-AT	71791	31 May 1960

ACTION OFFICER (Signature) Major Howard
(Typed Grade and Surname)

TYPIST'S INITIALS: sas

SUBJECT: SAMOS and MIDAS

SUMMARY

Reference: Letter from General Power to General White

1. General Power expressed concern over the lack of progress in the SAMOS development program and lack of approval for any operational programs to date. In addition, the Under Secretary of the Air Force is withholding the approval for "Early Fix" facility at Omaha.

2. The proposed answer provides the current status of these programs and the further redirection of the operational plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

3. That the Chief of Staff sign the proposed reply.

1 Atch
Proposed ltr to Gen Power

JOHN L. MARTIN, JR.
Colonel, USAF
Deputy Assistant for Advanced
Technology, DCS/Development

#43

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1 AFDDC Approval
2 AFCDC Coord
3 AFCIN Coord
4 AFCCS Signature

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AFDSD-AT Rewritten/Maj Floyd/71791/ss/14 Jun 60

SAMOS and MIDAS

JUN 16 1960

General Thomas S. Power
Commander-in-Chief
Strategic Air Command
United States Air Force
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Tommy

By letter of 20 April 1960, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has approved in principle the development program as defined in the Research and Development Plans, dated 15 January 1960, for DISCOVERER, SAMOS and MIDAS. This approval provides for 35 DISCOVERER, 25 SAMOS and 10 MIDAS vehicles. These R&D launches will be accomplished on the fastest schedule that is feasible. It is my belief that this represents an acceptable R&D program.

The operational program, both as to scope and timing, does not enjoy the same status. The operational plans were sent by the Secretary of Defense to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in February 1960 for comment. Since that time the Chief of Naval Operations has resubmitted his proposal for a Joint Military Astronautics Command. I feel that it is most important that these two JCS actions be kept separate. It is necessary, therefore, to dispose of the latter action first. This is being done.

There has been and continues to be strong opposition to the Operational Plans. Approval of the MIDAS plans is being delayed because of the doubt that has been expressed both openly and otherwise by DDR&E in our ability to achieve necessary system reliability. The cost of operation of an operationally unreliable system can be exhorbitant. There are no operational funds currently in the FY 1961 budget, although I have asked the Secretary of Defense and the Congress to approve our requests for these. As for SAMOS, the DDR&E and various scientific advisory groups believe our plan grandiose and unrealistic. As yet we have been unable to sell concurrency for our space programs. However, we are continuing to plug for this at every opportunity.

It appears that sufficient opposition exists to the present operational plans for SAMOS to preclude early approval. The requirement at this time

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for construction of a 303,000 sq. ft. SOC/DPF at Offutt, before the system has demonstrated success and more firm design criteria is available, is most frequently questioned. It is clear that in order to accelerate our operational use of BARDS, it will be necessary to adopt some well organized interim plans. Therefore, I have directed ARDC, as team captain, to prepare a new plan for exploitation of any possible reconnaissance data which may result from the R&D tests. I understand your staff is participating with ARDC. Since you will be involved with this exploitation, I expect the new plan to be mutually acceptable.

Sincerely

Signed

THOMAS D. WHITE
Chief of Staff

Office Symbol	1	2	3	4	5
	FER	2 ILC	AFCIN		AFDRC
Initial Office Coordination	AAS	CIRAD	Wheeler		Gen. Wilson has seen and concurs WE Germain 14 June

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This sent Bent out

SAMOS and MIDAS

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Commander-in-Chief
Strategic Air Command
United States Air Force
Omaha, Nebraska

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There has been and continues to exist strong opposition to the Operational Plans. The MIDAS plans are being delayed primarily because of lack of confidence by DDR&E in the probability of reliably achieving the design life; and hence, not yet considered economically sound for operational funding. There are no operational funds currently in the FY 1961 budget, although I have asked the Secretary of Defense and the Congress to approve our operational fund requests. As for SAMOS, the DDR&E, and various scientific advisory groups believe our plan too grandiose and unrealistic. As yet we have not been able to sell concurrency for our space programs, even though at every opportunity all Air Force spokesmen have plugged for and will continue to plug for concurrency.

The Under Secretary of the Air Force instructed me on 27 May 1960 to prepare a new interim operational plan for SAMOS by making provision to handle in a reasonable fashion any operational take from the R&D flights.

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This could be either as a separate interim operational capability or as an augmentation to the R&D capability, and with Air Force personnel, rather than contractor personnel responsible for the operation.

It is abundantly clear that the current SAMOS plan will not be approved and, therefore, I have directed ARDC, as team captain, to prepare the new interim plan as requested. Further, the "Early Fix" contruct will have to be delayed pending resolution of basic questions as raised by the Under Secretary until the requested plan is submitted, evaluated, and appropriate instructions provided. It seems necessary to prepare a plan which will be accepted and which will also provide the maximum opportunity to obtain data on Soviet ICBM sites during this most critical time, and provide for an adequate military operational intelligence system at the earliest realizable date.

AFDSD-AT/Maj Howard/sas/71791/31 May 60

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AFCCS File Cy
AFDDC Info Cy
AFCIN Info Cy
AFCVC Info Cy